

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Custom Graphics

#### North Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Custom Graphics, Inc. Accommodates Growth Through Lean

##### Client Profile:

Custom Graphics, Inc., is a leading commercial screen printer and digital printing company specializing in custom decals, overlays and vehicle markings. A large part of the business is providing decals to several large agricultural equipment manufacturers, and decals, signage and coroplast signs to franchised businesses. The company services clients in the U.S. and several European countries. Custom Graphics, Inc., employs 35 people at its facility in Fargo, North Dakota.

##### Situation:

Custom Graphics General Manager, Zach Paxton, had first been exposed to the North Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Dakota MEP) in 2006 through a "21st Century Marketing" seminar he attended. Paxton later became interested in Lean and contacted Dakota MEP for assistance.

##### Solution:

Paxton enrolled in the Lean Enterprise Certification Program (LECP) offered by Dakota MEP which included 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)/Visual Factory and Standardized Work postings. The LECP participants took part in a quick changeover Kaizen in his company and were able to offer several suggestions for improvement. "It was an interesting experience to have a group come in and watch our processes," said Paxton. "Most of them had no idea about screen printing; they were objective and helpful." Paxton said one solid idea coming from the experience was using multiple-shelf rolling carts to transport work into the shop. As a result of the Dakota MEP training and Kaizen activity, Custom Graphics was able to accommodate a 20 percent growth in sales without having to add new employees.

##### Results:

- \* Increased sales by 20 percent.
- \* Estimated cost savings of \$65,000.

##### Testimonial:

"Attending the Lean Enterprise Certification Program gave me a new outlook into our processes and the amount of waste that arises from things as simple as organization and 5S. It has given our company a great motivation to improve our processes in order to better service our customer and reduce our manufacturing costs."

Zach Paxton, General Manager